

Emigdio Cabico #56  
February 27, 1985

Q: Mr. Cabico, where were you working before the War started?

A: I was working at the plantation store.

Q: Which store?

A: Heleman Grand

Q: Heleman?

A: Heleman Grand, I was the store manager.

Q: What were you doing on Dec. 7th, 1941?

A: Well, as I said, some of my friends, that was Sunday, stores closed. We don't open Sunday. But since I opened, I came if I can do a favor (cannot understand)... I said, "O.K.". So, I went out and we... I was putting the ceiling fan. Then we saw about five planes. Was so low. Almost touched the top of the cane field. So we was Wondering how come this airplanes is flying so low. Was really low! Then (cannot understand) I don't know... I don't know. Took us by surprise. Then after maybe three minute, then we heard machine gun... "katakatakata!" that's in the cane above Heleman they were before... before the pineapple cane. Then we was wondering how come machine gun? Then about... about 5 minute we heard the big explosion, you know? So all we can hear was that, So oh loud and "Bong bong bong bong". This was the bomb. They bombed the warehouse and all the (can't understand) that was parked on the field. So I was wondering, hey, how come? So I was wondering, one of my neighbors... my friend said, "O.K. Go home and open your radio." Then he opened his radio and said, "Oh wah wah wah that in Hawaii, I mean America, Japanese". So everybody get excited. (laughter) So everybody went home. They had on the radio. And then they broadcast Filipino, Japanese, and all, so everybody surprised... everybody surprised. So we said, "Well, what are we going to do now? War! Everybody go home! Make ready, because in case they come Hawaii maybe they going to come and kill us!" (laughter) So everybody went home... everybody went home.

Then after so many days... after that day... next day, then somebody come around don't use no light.

Q: What did you have to do to your house?

A: Well, (cannot understand) ... you have to come home early and cook early, but don't use light. Without. If you do use light there's a guard going around, if you get light in house, they come knock your door, "Hey, your light is on." So you have to prepare early your supper... eat early, in order to knock off the light.

Then after a week or so, they came again. Make a bomb

shelter... your own. Everybody surprised! (laughter) Make your bomb shelter!

Q: How did you do that?

A: Well we had to dig, you know! Like my friend come help me out, you know, because I'm alone, so we have to help one another to dig big holes, and you know, bomb shelter... make your own bomb shelter. So that's what we did.

Then after a few weeks maybe, then soldier came in. It's about 500 of them. They put the pen around the playground and the playground is not enough, also (cannot understand) the whole thing. So since I was working in the store, I cannot keep up in serving them, serving them soda for the water. So the Captain say, "Hey, Cabico, you want help?", "Yes!" Oh so they give me about 10 soldier just open the soda water, I collect the money. So many soldier over there you know. They all thirsty you know... you all thirsty. Even the cook he drink because he no can give up... he no can give up. So, well, I say thank you very much because the soldiers come to help me yah? You must think 500 soldier along the camp. How can you expect them to serve them. Everybody like cook, they all thirsty...(laughter)... they all thirsty.

Then after that, maybe after a month, then the Sergeant, the Lt. came to me, "Mr. Cabico," I said, "Yes." "...you folks have to learn how to fight because not only us will fight the enemy in case they come. You folks have to learn." And what we have? We have knives that's all. He said, "No, we teach you how to use the rifle." I say, "O.K! ...use the machine gun," I say, "O.K!" (laughter) "O.K., call all Filipino." O.K., I did. I call all of them, and then we got a meeting. I told them that the soldier, the Lt. will come here and give us instruction how to use the gun. They say, "O.K. Sure. Why not!"

So that Sunday at 11:00 we went to a beach, right? And we practiced how to shoot the gun; then after the gun the machine gun, you know; and then after that, that big cannon you know... that big cannon. Oh you can see the fire... you can see. So we know. We learn. We learned how to operate those.

Then after that they tell, "Oh, Mr. Cabico, we have to learn how to march." I say, "O.K.!" But after everybody come home, everybody work, they say O.K. Well when they come home I have a meeting again. I tell them, "O.K., we got meeting." They say, "Why?" "Oh, we got to learn how to march!" Oh the big crowd showed up (laughter) how to march, how to walk. O.K., then they... you know, since I understand very well; they don't understand, so I had to dictate how to execute, right face, left face, (cannot understand) so we did do that. So every Sunday, we have parade... just like parade of march through all the sugar, all they watching us how to parade. Then it happened that they also make different camp... they did also make different camp.

So one day everybody which one the best foot... best marching. So we participate in the contest (cannot understand). Oh! Plenty people... plenty people, all soldiers... plenty people. So we didn't ask who got the first prize, but I know because we were practicing first eh? So, we know already. I commanding in Filipino, so when I say, "Right face!", eh we

were over there! "Left face!". eh go that way... everybody  
(laughter) We had good fun you know... we had good fun. So that  
how we... as far as I know... as far as I know.

Q: When they give you folks the rifles, was there any trouble  
between the Filipino people and the Japanese people living over  
here?

A: Uh, no, when they heard the news, especially the broadcast on  
the Filipino radio, that the Japanese were (??) in the  
Philippines. So this Filipino, they get mad. I'm going to kill  
this Japanese. They kill my father. I said, "No, don't do that.  
If you do that you going to be in jail all your life. Because  
this is America now... remember this is America. So they cannot  
do that. If you kill somebody, you go in jail for nothing. So  
you better not." So they cool off on account of me. I advise  
them don't do anything. After all, the old Japanese, they all  
nice to us, as friend, as usual, you know we came to the store.  
We're all friends. No hard feelings, because I don't have no hard  
feelings that's why. Because the War is in the Philippines, not  
here in Hawaii.(laughter) So everybody cool off. So everybody  
depart. Feel happy. No trouble... no trouble. Anything else  
you want to know?

Q: I can't think of anything. Well, going back to.... one other  
thing.... going back to on the day of the attack. Did you try  
to get outside at all and see what was happening? Like drive  
around or anything?

A: We tried to walk you know? As I said eh, since the Kam  
Highway we wanted to drive. But since all the truck passing by  
and one policeman say, "Hey, go home! Go home! Go home!" So  
everyone went home. So we like watch the car, all the big car,  
all the cannon, and all what not eh? Soldier are passing  
by loaded with soldiers, we like watch. But I think it was one  
policeman I think tell us, "Go home. You cannot cross the road."  
So everybody went home (laughter); each individual. So that's  
what as far as I know.

Well of course during the War we cannot go out because when  
they put the gasoline ration, only pay dollar one month. How we  
expect to go only paying one dollar one month. So we just around  
the camp that's all... that's all. Because only ten gallons a  
month. We cannot go out.... we cannot go out. We cannot go out  
with ten gallons. Go out to restaurant, Heleman, come back that's  
all, with the ten gallon a month. That's the ration.

So during the War we are happy because some of the people they  
wanted to go out someplace you see you cannot go. Then toward the  
end of the gasoline ration, then that's the time. Now(cannot understand)  
we don't know about Honolulu. We don't know about Honolulu, especially  
all the Filipinos. Only they saw Honolulu when they reach at the pier.  
That's why they know Honolulu. So they are interested to go to Honolulu.  
It happened that one businessman (Japanese) he get three car, Alleluia.  
He's my friend. He told me, "Cabico, if you are interested to go  
to Honolulu, I have three cars are available." So we took all  
the Filipinos to town cause they like go Honolulu. We did... we did.

You see, those days very cheap only 50 cents to go back and forth. That's how we learned how to go to Honolulu. Then he told us again, "You like to go to the business lady?" We said, "Sure, why not!" He said, "O.K. I have to learn the way." Well of course, it would be Saturday sometime. Friday night we go. Saturday night we go. Saturday night we go. Then I leave all the room... I leave all the room. Then after that I go to my car... my car see. I go to my car. Well, I don't worry already because I got plenty passenger. (cannot understand quite a few sentences) I charge them only 50 cents. This time I charge them 50 cents. So ... (can't understand) I tell them "I'm Filipino, you like me", they say, "Yes". "So when we get to the Honolulu what kind of meat you like. You like white meat" (Laughs). Yes we have no problem. So we went to the Ala Moana Hotel(?) So the lady who (cannot understand) over there, O.K., whenever one passenger she give me one dollar... she gave me one dollar.

Q: Each one?

A: Each one. So I'm lucky because you know I got five dollar... I got five dollar. I say good. I don't worry my monthly payment on my car because I make money... I make money.

Q: How much did they charge each day?

A: Five dollar. Eat one pound get five dollar (laughter). So I make money... I make money. It was good fun. Then you like cheap kind meat. Say how much? Two dollar. Say O.K. we go. Maybe we win again. Maybe we make fifty cents. (laughter) They give me 50 cents... I make more money. So I (don't understand) white meat, I make more money, make more money.

Then after that, you know being a plantation grand store manager. Then they told my again that Cabico, uh, will you tell us what (cannot understand)... We come.

Q: Out from town out to here?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah... we come. He say, "Oh, how much (cannot understand)... oh one dollar the white meat". He say, "O.K." Easy one yah? I told all the Filipino O.K., after pay today, tonight they going to come... I call them up. Oh, they come. Then after so many months we doing that, I read in the newspaper that this is against the law. (laughter) I read in the newspaper is against the law. I ask (??). So I told those people I don't solicit nobody because once you get caught... too bad. Since the soliciting have been trouble, I don't want to involve because after all I'm grand store manager (Laughs) maybe, I get fired from my job. So we stopped.

So, they come. They only ask me sometime. They call me up. Only one telephone in the camp, only in the store. They call me hey Cabico, when will be pay day. Oh Friday. So we come again, so now it's up to you guys now. I don't interfere now. I escape because after all it is written in this paper it is against the law. But this year not so strict maybe, how come in Honolulu ... no more police man, no more squad come around. But I read in the

newspaper that is against the law... against the law. But so far, how long we doing it in the cab. But besides here I don't anymore (laughter). After all I'm grand store manager then I get caught solicit (cannot understand). I get involved uh? I don't like. So we stopped. The only thing, when they called my up... they called me up said Cabico, when is it going to be pay day "Do you want to fool around", I say.. O.K. tell them. No, no I don't want to tell them. It's up to you guys. If we get caught we get in trouble. How you know it. From Cabico, say I no like... I no like any more. The only thing I can pay is what they paid. (cannot understand) Well, that's all.

Q: Well, that's really interesting.

A: So those days no more, no more, no more reprisals those days... no more. So what I did since I understand very much. Say why don't we sometime garden together and we do it ourselves. See some of the boys can play the guitar any kind. Say why don't we do something like one club. Yeah but when we get done like that we no more girls. Oh well we go around plenty girls go around. In those days all Filipino girls or other girls. So everybody have to find their own partner in order we get social done (laughter). Well, when they come, well we dig up. We have just like a party, just like picnic. We dig up one dollar each in those days, meat is so cheap, so we can afford to buy meat, buy pork, all kind, we make them feel good. Uh! The partners and the parents, you know the girl make them feel good. See, that's how we meet, that's how we (can understand) in the camp...

Now later on, I was assigned to Kawailoa... I went back to Kawailoa. Then no more same thing. No more reprisal. So what I did... what I did, I told them (cannot understand) So we did in each camp get one (cannot understand). So each Sunday big crowd in the playground. (Laughter)(can't understand) we challenge each other. Then I told them enough, enough. What about volleyball? Sure! Sure, young boy they play volleyball. So we make again volleyball in each camp. So I do all the arranging what can we play. Every Saturday night, oh big crowd. (cannot understand). Then afterward I think the plantation make money, huh. They build up theater for them in a tent. In those days only ten cent to go in the theater. Then afterward they make a tennis court. We don't know how to play tennis. But I told them we have to learn... we have to learn. So and the leader said you have to learn; buy the racket and all so I work in the store. The more I sell the more I make more money. Sell all the racket (laughter). So they learn fast how to play tennis. So we challenge again. Then after a while pretty soon they not make money. They build one game, skating game you know, skating inside the you know...

Q: Roller skating?

A: Yeah. Roller skate and dancing and all like that and everything in there you know. (cannot understand)so kind they make money. So we pool and swimming pool you know. So we had good fun in the camp. We forgot all about the War(laughter)... forgot all about the War. So we get good fun. (cannot understand) that's as

far as I...

Q: Well that's interesting. That's interesting. I'm really glad I talked to you.

A: (laughter) O.K. really.

Q: O.K. thank you.

A: Well of course, the first time I get, how did I came to Hawaii. And uh, I told them the story. You know, when I came to Hawaii, I was only 16 to 17 1/2. Then when I went to Manila and they reject me because I'm too young. They no like me because I'm too young. Because the high age people, 21, 22, 23, I don't have any personal contact. So you know what I did, I like to come to Hawaii. I went back home, because they told me that you get permit from your parents consent, and signed by the municipal (can't understand). So I did. I went back. I went back to my parents and I told them that I will borrow my brothers pack (cannot understand). They said why? Because they no like take me because I too young. So what I did I took my brothers pack. I used his name and put mine on. Then I went back to Manila and I showed (they don't know me anyway) I showed them I'm 31. My name is Saguario(?). Then they believe me. That's why I go to Hawaii (laughter). You see, that's why I came to Hawaii. Otherwise I cannot come to Hawaii.

Q: What province were you from originally?

A: Near Pangasanan.

Q: Oh, up north.

A: In the middle top of Luzon. That's how I came to Hawaii because used my brothers name, Saguario(?) Now when I took the citizenship then I changed my name. It was on the application, "What is your real name". What name you use when you came to Hawaii. That's why my name Amillio Cabico. See all my people they change that in the office. (cannot understand)(Laughter). You see, (can't understand) I was lucky that we made into Hawaii. They put me as clerk, because when we arrived here in Hawaii, when we arrive here in Hawaii, about 65 people together, then when we went to the office they cannot, Haole, Japanese write our name, spell our name. So we had hard time writing our name. So we ask who can write. So I raise up my hand. So I write all the name. Then when they saw my penmanship was so fancy ... they said Wow. Did you graduate in Santo Tomas University? I said no. How come you can write so fancy? That's how, the way I wright. It is my handwriting. See they don't believe. What grade are you, I don't eaven graduate primary grade in the Phillipines. No, no, no, you are telling lie. You better tell the truth. I'm telling you the truth , I did not eaven graduate primary grade, O.K I was in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, O.K. I was promoted fifth grade, I attended 5<sup>th</sup> grade three months, then I came to Hawaii, people don't believe, I'm only attended three months 5<sup>th</sup> grade in three months in the Phillipines. They assign us to Kauailoa(?) and then they told me that tomorrow don't walk because we coming

to pick you up it's over by the manager O.K. Then that was Monday morning I think they came to my house. The policeman come. Hey, Cabico, you going jail, Why! Because you not telling the truth, you telling lie. Hey no,no,no, I'm telling the truth. You going jail boy. Well, I was so scared but what I did. I didn't do nothing. O.K., they took me to the office, interview by one of the superintendent. O.K. what kind job you want. [I say] "Any kind of job as long as I get paid". He said what kind of job. You like work in the office. 'No, I can just fill anyplace as long as it pay". And he said "Can you take the test". Yes. If you pass the test then you qualify to work in a store as a clerk. I say "Yes". So I did. We had about eight take the test. We went one room, it was about eight hours. So written test. Oh I was thinking it's so simple... so simple. So I finish this within one hour. Oh no one hour, I make it quick, not even ten minute I finish because so simple uh? And that was how I write fancy kind... fancy. Well, you know, I don't know so much English uh? So yeah, so they said write Honolulu (cannot understand), write your name (cannot understand)... (laughter) (Cannot understand) review why should I review, finished, don't need review (cannot understand). He took my paper. He say O.K. (cannot understand) (Laughter) some of them 7th grade, some of them 6th grade, some of them 8th grade. How come you have such a low grade but you finish so quick. So they was surprised again. See how I finished so quick and my handwriting. O.K. ( cannot understand) this people (cannot understand) manager in the plantation want a job. Then the policeman say "Ah!, boy, you go jail today". I say how come. Then O.K. Manager want to see you. So is that right your going to put me in jail not telling the truth? He saying no me only kidding you (laughter) They kidding you, how come they sent you to [take]the test? And your handwriting so fancy. You graduate from the Santo Thomas University. I say no sir. You no believe. Take me home and I will get my monthly report Card (cannot understand). So I went home. Then I get my card, then they believe me, I was in low grade never go to college (laughter).

Then they put me in the store right away as a clerk. That's how I got my job. Now the worst part again, in that store there were about seven men working and they all [were from] Visaya. And I'm Illicano, and we cannot understand each other because they are Visayan and I'm Ilocano. So we can understand each other by talking English because we know how to speak little bit English, little bit Japanese. Now the problem again, those Visayan people they was so jealous. They no teach me the price, the item, the price, they gave me a little mop. So I went to the grand manager How do you expect me to sell if you don't put the price on the item. How do I know the price. He said well you have to learn, you have to learn. Well if that's how you fell, my goodness, then well O.K. Now when Filipino come it's about 200 one time come to the store, they all Ilocano. They all come to me because they know I'm an Ilocano. How can I serve them if I don't know the price of the item, the canned goods. I don't know because they don't teach me. So naturally I got hard time. I told them I just start to work today. I don't know the price Vienna sausage, I don't know the Spam, the price(cannot understand). Then I went say how come the other people no sell. They cannot understand one another. They took this letter to the Ilocano,they don't know how to speak Visayan, they talk English. They don't know how to speak English. So I tell him why don't you teach Tagalog maybe they understand, why don't you folks talk to them in Visayan, but I'm not Visayan you don't understand our language to either. So (cannot understand).

When I learn all the price, every item I put down, because I ask. If you don't teach me I go report you. How can you expect me to sell if I don't know the price. Then I learned after three months, I knew every item in the store. I memorize all the price. Then I complain. I wrote a letter to the manager... the general manager. I got hard time in the store because mostly all [*store workers*] are Visayan, and I take care of all the Ilocano, I got a hard time. How do you expect me to, 100 come at one time, how do you expect me to sell, these people [*Visayan store workers*], always talking story in one corner? I work hard. Then the manager come, "Is that right Mr. Cabico" yes I got hard time, "Oh!, If that's the case", yes they already come, they already come Visayan people. And then I can't sell the Visayan because I didn't learn the language. Within one month I learn the language, Visayan, I can speak Visayan language, but regardless Visayan, I can sell them, I can sell them. There is a language I can, because I learn the language so fast, I learn so I can sell the Visayan, Ilocano and Visayan. So that's right next day, three fired. Four left. Another day, three fired. (Laughter) Then the manager ask me who you want, I want Ilocano to come, Ilocano to come. O.K., so they hire Ilocano. So I feel good because Ilocano, I teach them the price and all (cannot understand) they learn. Then only the branch manager stayed back, because it's long time he's manager. Then after one year he does something wrong, he gets fired. That's why I am promoted as a manager. Being Filipino without education, it was the top (laughter). I'm on the top. By working honestly and very courteous to the customer that's how I got promoted, that's how I got promoted.

Q: O.K., well good.

(end of tape)